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UNCLAS CAIRO 009349

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NSC STAFF FOR SINGH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL EG

SUBJECT: EGYPT: AYMAN NOUR IN PRISON HOSPITAL, HUNGER

STRIKE CONTINUES

REF: CAIRO 9209

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Multiple Ghad Party contacts confirm press reports that opposition leader Ayman Nour was transferred on December 17 to the hospital in Mazra' Torah prison, just south of Cairo. Contacts advised that Nour, who is diabetic and also suffers from heart disease, was deteriorating. Nour announced during the December 12 session of his forgery trial that he was beginning a hunger strike.

¶2. (SBU) A senior Ghad Party contact told us that prison authorities had sent Nour a prison chaplain to persuade him to give up his hunger strike. Nour refused, according to our contact, and instead invited the chaplain to join him in the strike. The next session of the trial is set for December ¶24. Observers expect that the judge will announce the verdict and pass sentence on that day.

JONES